

Appl. No. 10/044,992
Amendment dated December 22, 2003
Reply to Office Action of September 29, 2003

Remarks

Claims 2-8 are pending in the application, with claim 3 being the independent claim. Claim 1 has been canceled; and claims 2-8 have been amended.

Based on the present Amendment and the following Remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Acknowledgement of Allowed Subject Matter

The indication in item 16 of the Action that claim 3 contains allowable subject matter is gratefully noted. Claim 3 has been rewritten in independent form and is allowable.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. The Action argues that the specification does not describe the "pressing mechanism" recited by claim 2.

The pressing mechanism is described on page 4 of the present specification, which states (emphasis added):

In the light-signal delaying device according to the present invention, one of the pair of stages to which the pair of optical fiber collimators is fixed is a fixed stage that is fixed at a predetermined position on the linear guide rail, the stage to which the pair of reflecting mirrors is fixed is a movable stage capable of moving along the linear guide rail, and each stage has a pressing mechanism for applying pressure in a direction perpendicular to the direction of movement of the linear guide rail to prevent a gap between the stages and the linear guide rail.

The pressing mechanism is also described on page 7 of the present specification, which has been amended for clarity and states (emphasis added):

The fixed stage 103 has the first and second optical fiber collimators 106 and 107 mounted thereon and is secured at a predetermined position on the linear guide rail 101. The movable stage 102 has the reflecting mirrors 104 and 105 and can be moved along the linear guide rail 101. Furthermore, the fixed stage 103 and the movable stage 102 are provided with a pressing mechanism (not shown) for

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applying a pressure in a direction perpendicular to the direction of travel of the movable stage 102 along the linear guide rail 101 in order to prevent a gap between the stages 102 and 103 and the engaged linear guide rail 101.

It is respectfully submitted that the pressing mechanism of claim 2 is adequately described in the specification. As described in the specification, the pressing mechanism prevents a gap between stages 102 and 103 and the engaged linear guide rail to prevent the guide rail from moving laterally within the track, which can degrade the signal. The pressing mechanism is well known in the art, and can include, for example, a small pressing element biased by a spring. In view of the above, reconsideration of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2 and 4-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,066,088 to Davies et al. ("Davies") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,356,377 to Bishop et al. ("Bishop"). Claim 1 has been canceled, and claims 2 and 4-8 have been amended to depend from allowable claim 3. As such, claims 2 and 4-8 are in condition for allowance.

Claim 6 is additionally rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Davies in view of Bishop, as applied to claim 1, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,855,744 to Halsey et al. As noted above, claim 6 has been amended to depend from allowable claim 3 and is in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

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If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

A Notice of Allowance with claims 2-8 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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